613 the assembly.

Though the order of segmentation is known in the taravad and is relevant to reversion of property, to the emotional strength of matrilineal ties, and to ultimate division of the group into new exogamous taravads, the Nayars cannot therefore be said to have a lineage in the strict British sense of a system in which "minimal groups of unilineal kin combine into larger groups in contrast to [53] other groups of like nature which in turn combine until a maximal lineage or clan is formed as a capstone to the whole structure." (4) However, since it does not appear certain that matrilineal lineages of this type exist anywhere, yet since the term "matrilineage" is in current use to describe corporate groups of a matrilineal society in which the order of segmentation is known, I use this word to describe corporate groups of a matrilineal society in which the order of segmentation is known, I use this word to describe the taravad.

421 V The Traditional Kinship System

(1) The Property-Group

(a) The Corporate Character of the Group

A traditional property-group was a small segment of the lineage, usually comprising a group of brothers and sisters by the same mother, and the children and daughters' children of the sisters. This group was the joint property-owning unit: its members, male and female, were from birth equal copartners in the buildings, gardens, kanam and janmam lands, movables, ritual objects and serfs owned by the group. The group

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



361 564 Habitations.

The Nayars, like other Malayali Hindus, are not lovers of towns, but generally live in detached houses, with large compounds and good gardens. The strict customs of caste purity and impurity in former times made them desert places where they were liable to be polluted by the members of very low castes. They generally select the site of a house either on the margin of a fertile valley or ravine with bright green fields of rice in front. The entrance to their compounds, which are often somewhat raised off the ground by laterite or mud walls, is at some little distance from the main house, and consists of a door in the centre of a strong gate-way, which is the first that attracts one's attention as the dwelling is approached. The gate is quaintly constructed, and the surroundings are exceptionally neat and tidy. It is also essential that a stair or a ladder should lead up to it from the bank of a green level paddy flat, reminding one of the days when security of life and property depended upon one's own ability to laugh a seige to scorn; when a Nayar house was his castle, and when at the gate-way were posted retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies. Seats for them to rest on, right and left, both outside and inside, a solid quaintly carved door and lintel, a room above approached by a ladder from inside, with windows, or openings whence shots were discharged on lawless intruders, and finally a thatched roof, complete the characterstics of a gate house. Permission to build such a gate house was a rare privilege and had to be obtained from the rulers, but with a change in the old order of things, this restriction has, like many others of the kind, ceased to exist. The plan and other details of the structure of a Nayar house are determined in strict conformity with the principles of the ancient Hindu science of architecture based on astrology.[1] A compound or garden is first selected and measured out into a square plot and is then divided into four parts by imaginary lines running lengthwise and breadthwise through the centre or middle of it. Either the north-east or south-west portion is chosen for the site of a house, the former being preferred to the latter. The south-east corner is generally set apart as the family burial-ground. There are again special spots selected for the well, tank, cow-shed, serpent grove and the family deity. The selection of the site for the house is

1. Chandrika.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
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Nayar

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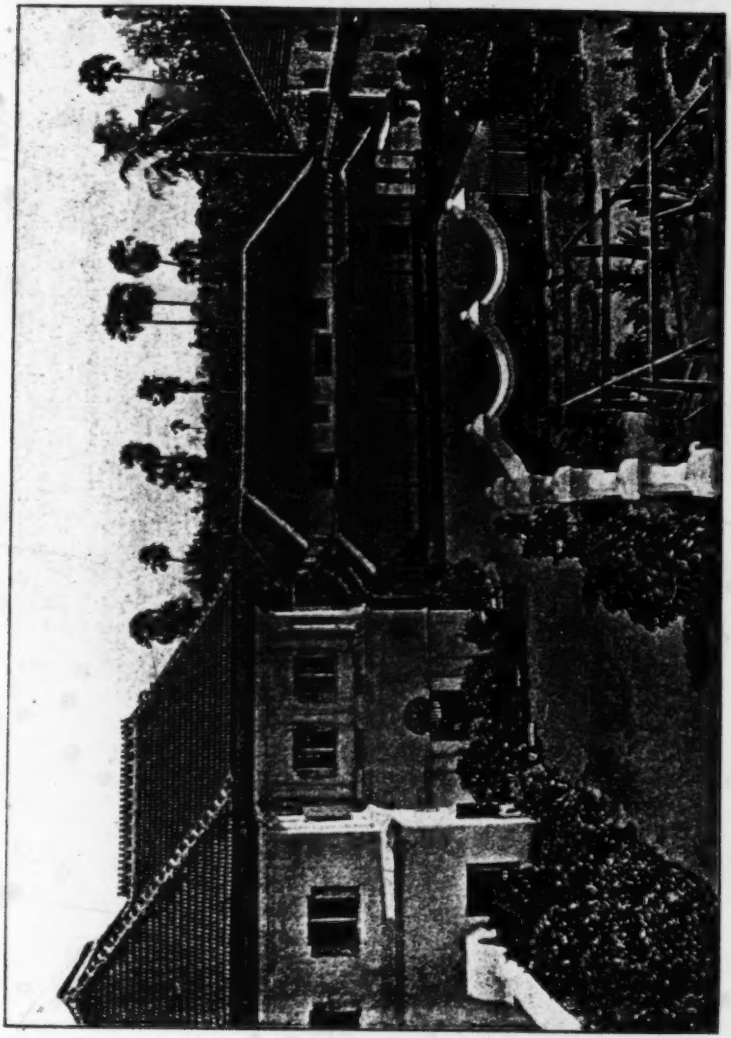

A TYPICAL ARISTOCRATIC NAYAR HOUSE.

[facing p. 8]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



partly guided by the influence of the monsoon. In regard to the serpent grove or religious shrine, a square plot just in the middle of the south-west portion is considered the most auspicious. A typical Nayar house is quadrangular, with an open space (*mittam*) in the centre; the western portion of it is the granary, while the rest of it is partitioned into rooms. The northern portion comprises the store-room and the kitchen at the western and the eastern extremities, with the dining room in the middle, while the western and eastern portions are kept as open halls for gatherings on important occasions. The house so constructed must face the rising sun—the east—and yet rather inconsistently it is called the *patinjattupura* or the western roof or building. The reason of this is that the *patinjattu muri*—the central chamber or the honoured guest chamber in the house, sanctuary of the ancestors of its occupants—must be so placed as to admit of entrance through its doorway the sun's earliest rays. Behind one or more of the rooms above mentioned is a *chaippu* forming a kind of enclosed verandah room. Another type most commonly met with consists of a portico serving as a reception-hall, the other portions of the building corresponding in details, more or less, with the quadrangular edifice just described. The rigid adherence to the science of architecture is confined not only to the Nayars and other high caste-men, but also to the generality of the Native Christians and Mahomedans who, before construction, always consult some expert in the choice of a proper site and the formation of a ground plan of the house. Misfortunes or even calamities are often attributed to the violation of these principles, and very often a newly built house is either altered to remedy the defects or even pulled down. There are again houses, where the two types are combined. The huts of the poor classes consist generally of one or two small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms with a kitchen at one end, and a verandah either in front or on all sides of the main building. With the increase of population, and with the demand for more houses, the old notions and *sastraic* injunctions are being overlooked as a matter of necessity, and the old fashioned houses are displaced by those erected on sound sanitary principles. The wood-work of the buildings is solid and substantial, and is in some cases beautifully carved. The walls are generally of laterite, brick or mud, and roofs which till

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



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342 recently were thatched are now being tiled with tiles of European pattern manufactured either locally or in Mangalore.
342 In these days of comparative peace and security of life and
178 property from marauders and free-booters, the necessity for massive structures has ceased to exist, and, coupled with this, the improved notions of architecture, derived from an easy intercourse with more civilised centres, the rapid progress of education, and with it a better knowledge of, and regard for, sanitation and hygiene, have wrought remarkable changes in the construction of buildings, so that a better class of houses, well built, airy, and commodious, is displacing the old ones with their small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms.

351 As part of the surroundings of the dwellings in the same
[343] compound, there are frequently seen a cattle shed, an excavated
[312] tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water lilies, a
[515] well so arranged as to admit of water being drawn directly from it to the kitchen, an out-house *(matam)* for the Brahman
[574] travellers or visitors, and, lastly, a small edifice for the family
[343] deity. The gardens surrounding the houses are adorned with
[245] mango and jack trees, immense bananas, groves of cocoanut and areca palms and various kinds of flowers. Thus, in most places, their houses, which are occupied by fine types of humanity, (well made men and shapely women), are situated beneath the grateful shade of magnificent avenues of trees.

356 Four hundred years ago, a Portuguese traveller, writing
[175] on the subject, remarks upon the Nayar houses as being scrupulously clean and neat. Without any exaggeration it may be said that they are proverbially so, and the women are either naturally endowed with a taste, or are trained from early child-
352 hood, to keep the houses and everything therein neat and clean.
[556] Those of the richer and middle classes are in these days fur-
[177] nished with articles of European manufacture, and all their domestic utensils, for daily use, are made either of bell-metal, copper or brass, all well cleaned and washed early every morning.

415 The furniture of the poorer classes is very simple; a metal
352 pot with a spout, a few metal plates and saucers, a few metal
412 pans of different sizes, a spitoon of brass, a few mats, a knife,
184 a cot or two, a betel box, and a few wooden bins for grains, are nearly all the requirements of a household in this respect.

342 The house itself is called by several names according to
564 the occupant's caste, that of an ordinary Nayar being a *veedu*

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



or *bhavanam*, while the man in authority dwells in an *idam*, and the Raja in a *kovilakam* or *kottaram*. A separate name for each *tarawad* or family is peculiar to this coast. 342 564

There are some superstitious beliefs entertained by the Nayars as well as other high caste-men, in the selection of the site for a house and compound, the quality of the soil, the site of the tank, well, cow-shed, and the edifice for the family deity; and as an account of these will be of some ethnographic interest, it is given below:— 342 351 823 [564]

The best site should abound with milky trees full of fruits and flowers; its boundary should be of a quadrangular form, level and smooth with a sloping declivity towards the east, producing a hard sound with a stream running from left to right, of an agreeable odour, fertile, and of an uniform colour, containing a great quantity of soil, producing water when dug to the height of a man's arm raised above his head, and situated in a region of moderate temperature. The ground possessed of qualities directly opposite to those mentioned above is the worst, and that which has a mixed nature is of the middling quality. [1]

The site to be avoided is described in a special manner as follows:—That which has the form of a circle, or a semicircle, or containing three, five or six angles, or resembling a trident or shaped like the back of a fish, the back of an elephant, or a turtle, or the face of a cow, etc., situated opposite to any of the intermediate quarters abounding with human skulls, stones or worms, ant-hills, bones, slimy earth, decayed wood, coals, dilapidated wells, subterraneous pits, fragments of tiles, limestones, ashes, husks of corns and exposed to the wafted effluvia of curds, oil, honey, dead bodies, and fishes; such a spot should be avoided on every account.

In regard to colour and taste, ground with smell like that of ghee and with sweet taste is good for Brahmans; that with the colour and smell of blood and with an astringent taste, for Kshatriyas; that with yellow colour, smell of boiled rice and bitter taste, for Vaisyas: and that with dark colour, smell of toddy and taste of cow-dung, for Sudras. [822] [827]

There is also a test for the selection of a site by lighting a lamp in a hole. A hole measuring one cubit in depth, [372]

1. Ramraz's essay on the architecture of the Hindus, London, pp. 15-23.

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Nayar



342 351 823 372 [564] having been well plastered with mud, a saucer of unbaked earth filled with ghee and four lighted wicks is placed therein, for testing the quality of the soil. If the wicks burn brightly in all four directions, the ground is fit for all the castes including Brahmans and other caste-men. If the wicks do not burn, it will not suit any of the four castes.

342 804 777 822 Auspicious times for the construction of houses. If the house is constructed by a person in the month of Medam (April-May) he gets disease: in Edavam (May-June) he gets money and jewel: in Mithunam (June-July) there will be death: in Ashad or Karkadakam (July-August) he gets servants and jewels, but no beasts; in Chingam (August-September) friendship; in Kanni (September-October) loss of friends; in Thulam (October-November) death of his wife; in Vrischigam (November-December) money and crops; in Dhanu (December-January) he will become a devotee; in Makaram (January-February) there will be fear from enemies and thieves, but the builder will know of profits from many directions: in Kumbham (February-March), danger of fires; in Meenam (March-April) gold and sons.

The following asterisms are auspicious for commencing a building:—Aswini, Rohini, Mulam, the three Uttaras, Mrigasirsha, Swathi, Hasta, Anuradha. All days of the week, except Sunday and Tuesday, are auspicious. A house should be commenced at auspicious moments known as *muhurtas*: Sveda, Mitra, Mahendra, Gandharva, Rohini and also Raja Sävitra. The erection of the pillars should be performed at auspicious *lagnas*, moments when the sun and the moon are favourable; other moments should be avoided.

342 777 821 Inauspicious times. Building operations should not be commenced in the rainy season nor at the end of the third part of the dark fortnight, and in the first and second part of the bright fortnight. Of the phases of the moon, the fourth, ninth, and fourteenth should be avoided. Tuesday is also to be omitted; for working on that day brings injury or bad luck. Days marked with dangers natural or any other, arising out of the earth, sky, or heavenly bodies and other calamities, such as the death of a friend, and those made ominous by the influence of some planets are considered inauspicious. A well informed person should do his work when the moon and the stars are favourable.

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AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



342 777 778 823

The construction of a house on the left or back of a Vishnu temple, on the right of a Siva or Durga temple, or by the right side of a Sastha temple, will cause calamities to the occupants; but that on the opposite side will bring prosperity.

Houses should not be constructed near temples, paddy flats, hermitages, the sea, hills, or cow-shed; if constructed near temples, they should be lower in height than the religious edifices.

342 823

Houses, constructed on a dry-land (*paramba*) with an elevation to the north-west, will last for eighteen years; and if on an elevation towards the east, south and south-east, a hundred years; if, however, they are built on a ground with an elevation to the north-east, they will last for a thousand, if to the west, twelve years, and to the north, eight years. Houses built on grounds sloping to the north with *athi* (Ficus racemosa) near them, those sloping to the east with *arayal* (Ficus religiosa) growing thereon, those with an inclination to the west, with Perâl (Ficus Indica) growing thereon, and grounds with *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) are fit for the occupation of the members of the four castes.

824 342 351 823

The following trees, namely, *elanni* (Mimusops Elangi), or *perâl* (Ficus Indica) growing on the eastern side of a house, *athi* (Ficus racemosa) or *puli* (Tamarindus Indica) on the southern side, *arayal* (Ficus religiosa), *pala* (Echites scholaris) or milk plant on the west, *nâga* tree (Trichosanthes anguina) and *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) on the north, will bring prosperity to the occupants. Jack and mango trees cocoanut and areca palms may grow on all sides of a house. *Arayâl* (Ficus religiosa) growing on the eastern side of a house will cause it to take fire, while *perâl* on the western side will give cause for fear from enemies. *Athi* on the northern side of the house will bring on abdominal complaints to the occupants. *Arâyal* growing near a house must be cut off, unless the distance between the house and the tree be twice the height of the latter. A cow-shed may be erected either to the east or the west of the main building; and a similar one to the south of it for bullocks and buffaloes. There are certain ceremonies performed both at the commencement of construction and at its various stages, as well as before the occupation of a house, a detailed description of which will be found in the account of the Brahmans. [1]

[343]

1. Chandrika.

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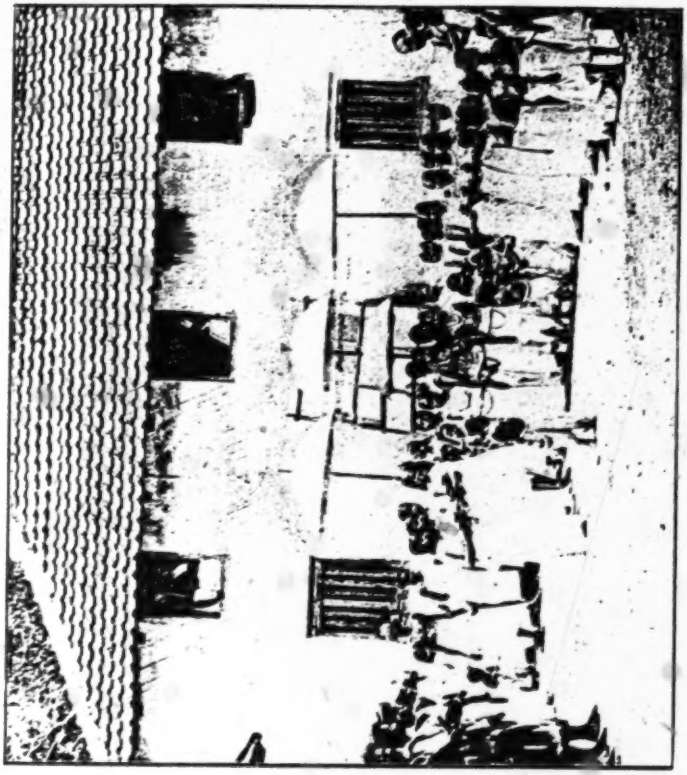

A NAYAR GIRL RETURNING HOME IN PROCESSION AFTER BATH
ON THE FOURTH DAY AFTER THE FIRST MENSES.

[facing p. 29]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



the eye, buffaloes with white tips to their tails, wild elephants caught in traps and wild hogs that had fallen into wells.

Even in social matters, these chieftains had supreme powers. In the settlement of marriages in any part of the country, the Nayars had to obtain the chieftain's sanction who held sway over the particular locality. The custom is even now in vogue though in a visibly weakened form. In the celebration of a *Kettu kalyánam* or *sambandham* in any part of the country, the parties concerned visited the chieftain and bought his consent with presents. For without such consent no settlement and celebration thereafter could be arranged. His consent had to be procured even for the holding of festivals.

The chieftain's powers were so great that, if a wife living with her husband proved an object of attraction to another, adequate presents to the chieftain would buy him a formal writ, giving him the rights of a husband over that woman. Thus even so late as only a generation or two ago, the chieftain's power was exercised in the encouragement of polyandry.

When a tali-tying ceremony had to be performed for a girl of any decent family in a locality, she was taken to the local chieftain with a nuzzar or *tirumulkáshcha* and other things prepared for the festival that was to follow. In return the girl was given a golden bracelet which she was authorised to wear in his presence. No girl who had not received such a one could wear it.

In certain parts of the State people were afraid to erect buildings of more than one storey, lest they should incur the inexorable wrath of the chieftain; nor were they allowed to tile thatched houses. Departures from these customs were allowed only with the consent of the chieftain, embodied in a writ issued by him. In rural parts even to this day such restrictions are not totally inoperative. In the State His Highness the Raja gives his sanction in regard to some social matters even to this day and Nambutiri landlords exercise a similar authority among the tenants occupying their lands. Certain kinds of conveyances such as palanquins and dholies were reserved only for chieftains while the *Pallichans* were the only people who were employed to carry them. Various titles [1]

1. Vide pages 18-20.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
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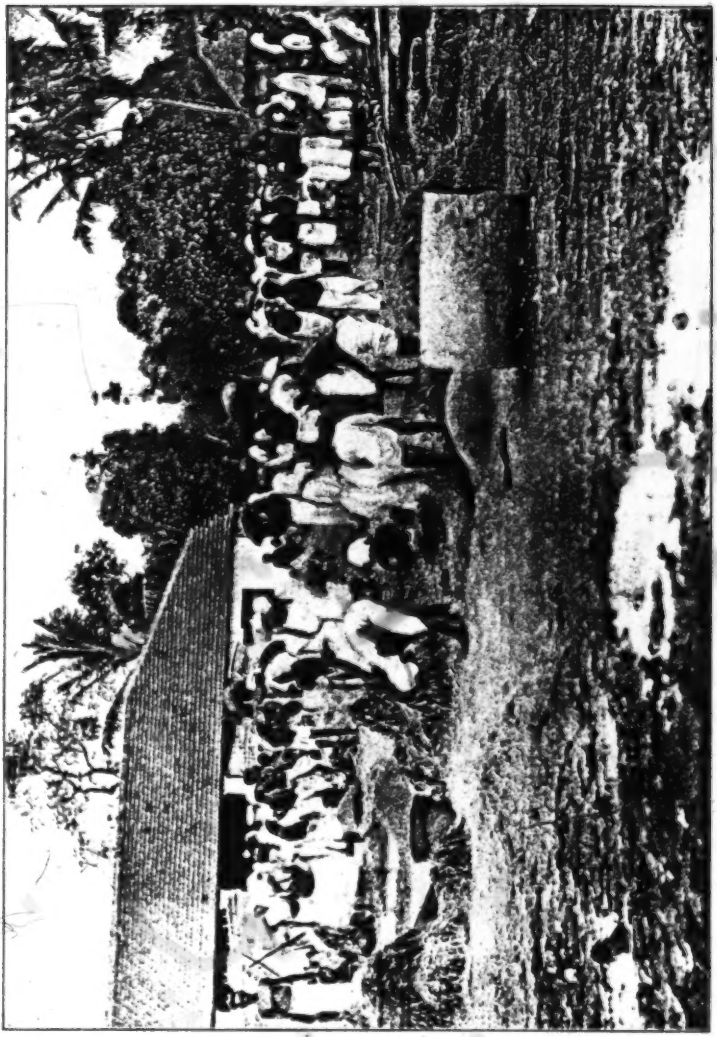
Nayar



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342
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NAYAR WOMEN THRESHING CORN.

[facing p. 98]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll



thorns and planted with big-leaved plantains, flowering bushes such as the hibiscus, and tall, slender arecanut palms, their graceful, shining trunks entwined with betel and pepper creepers. Here and there, a red tiled roof denotes the dwelling of some high-caste person, while elsewhere, the thatched roofs of the ordinary houses reveal the low social status of the majority.

Red laterite dust roads criss-cross this green scenery, highways and lesser paths upon which a continual stream of men and women, scantily clad in white, are forever on the move. Dry river beds in the spring and swollen, muddy torrents in the monsoon season, are crossed together with the broad expanse of calm, smooth backwaters on the way east to the inland red laterite hills. It is here that the majority of the terraced paddy fields are met with, green and flooded in the summer and dried up, with tufts of yellow straw stalks the rest of the year, their fringes strewn with rustling, restless coconut trees.

## 2. MYTHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Hindu Brahmin tradition has it, so I heard from my informants in this region, that Kerala (*Malayalam* or *Keralabhumi* as it is called in the *Keralolpatti* and *Kerala Mahatmyam* chronicles) was created from the sea by Parasu Raman, the axe-wielding avatar of the god Vishnu, and given to those Brahmins called Nambudri for their perpetual possession and enjoyment. The myth, to which even the modern Hindu inhabitants of Kerala subscribe, is no doubt symbolic of two things: the geological origin of the land at the foot of the Ghats, which appears really to have been uncovered from the sea in some ancient natural upheaval, and the colonization of Kerala by Aryan invaders from the north in a remote and ill-defined past.

The mythological tale, in detail, is that Parasu Raman was once ordered by his father to kill his mother, because the latter had been seen by her husband smiling at a youth when she was fetching water at the well. The son, in filial obedience to his father, carried out the order, but having done so, attempted in every possible way to atone for the abominable crime of matricide. He consulted Brahmins who requested of him that he exterminate twenty two generations of the rival warrior caste of Kshattryas. This he did, but the Brahmins were not satisfied. Parasu Raman then climbed the Western Ghats and, from the highest point, cast his axe into the sea calling upon it to withdraw, which it did. The land of Kerala thus came into existence and Vishnu's avatar, the

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Tiyas
Thandans



With the Thandans and the Tiyas (Tiyyas) of north Cochin, there were happily none of these difficulties, and I was able to study them at my ease. On the 23rd of July, 1939, I paid my first visit to Kerala when I drove to Palghat from Ootacamund in the Nilgiris and went to a Tiya house in Lakkidi in Walluvanad with an interpreter. The Tiyas we met that day were two men, brothers, who shared a wife. When we entered the yard of their broken-down palm leaf house, she was sitting bare-breasted, suckling a little boy whom she told us was hers. The two men, whose names I did not ascertain, told us that they followed *marumakkathayam*, which was surprising. In those days, I knew too little about Kerala to ask them if they came from north Malabar, as they probably did. But I have since heard from a blacksmith family which I visited at the same place on the 12th of November 1949, that they had indeed come from north Malabar, and that this was the reason why they were matrilineal. Their polyandry, on the other hand, was correlated with the economic plight in which they found themselves, and they had taken to it because it was the customary way to solve such difficulties with their fellows of the same caste in the south. They had no property and told us that they worked as paid labourers. For the house, they paid four annas a year to a local Brahmin landlord. They said, nevertheless, that polyandry was dying out and that the Nayars, for instance, did not practise it any longer. Theirs was obviously a sporadic instance of a matrilineal Tiya family from north Malabar in which the wife was being shared by two brothers in a south Malabar taluk, where fraternal polyandry prevails. It would be unwise to make any generalizations from this as it was, I think, quite an exceptional and probably isolated case.

On the 25th and 26th of October 1949, together with my interpreters, I visited a large Thandan household, about two miles east of Ottappalam. The family living there were called Appayl Watakkeh, and they belonged to the Appayl *tarawad*. The buildings in the compound consisted of one large mansion with a courtyard in front, at the end of which was a smaller house. Cattle and some dogs roamed about in the courtyard, where paddy was also drying. In the background, the green plantain, papaya and areca nut palms, contrasted sharply with the red soil and the laterite stones from which the houses were built, and the soaring trunks of tall coconut trees stood out, here and there.

We met the *karanavan*, called Raman, a man of forty eight, wearing only a piece of cotton from the waist down. He was wrinkled and partly bald, but very amiable and helpful when it came to questioning him. On the first day, we spoke in general terms to him about the Thandan

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans



the cross-roads of the main Shoranur-Palghat highway of the road to Lakkidi, a few furlongs down the latter, on the right hand side. In contrast to the Thandan houses to which we had been, although not to the Tiya (Thiyya) houses of the Cochin labourers, the place looked rather miserable. It was a thatched palm-leaf house, standing on a red laterite loam platform, in the middle of some paddy fields. There were signs about that these Tathans were not only goldsmiths but that they now also practised agriculture. There was paddy lying about to dry in heaps in the yard, and there were stalls for bullocks at the back.

We interviewed a man called Raman and his brother Kochen, aged fifty four and fifty two respectively, who lived polyandrously with their wife, Kurumba, forty five years old. They seemed rather impressed by us, and were reluctant to speak. They observed the outward forms of hospitality, however, and presented us with fresh coconuts for us to drink the milk.

Raman told us that the household's name was Padijarehil, meaning "Western", and that it was part of five others which constituted the Uzhugaparekil *tarawad*. The latter was *makkathayam*, as we expected, and exogamous, as was also their *kiriyam*, although, here too, they only observed the rule in matters which concerned those members of it whom they knew. They had two and a half acres of paddy fields, in simple *verumpattam* lease from a Nambudri Brahmin janmi called Kodiertha-mana. For this they paid five rupees a year and handed in a part of the harvest – five hundred *parahs*, I have in my notes, three hundred from the *kanni* crop and two hundred from the *magaram*.[1] As it was an ordinary *verumpattam*, there was no renewal fee. They had a deficit this year of forty *parahs* (roughly lbs. 866⅓) and they were wondering what they could do to make it good. Last year they had done "other work" (presumably such as hiring themselves out as labourers) in order to raise the cash needed to compensate for the deficiency in grain, and they might do the same thing now. When I asked them what kind of goldsmith's work they did, they laughed and said that they had given this up; how could they carry on with their traditional profession, they asked, when the sovereign which was once worth Rs. 25 had reached Rs. 77?

Raman and Kochen had had eleven children in their polyandrous

[1] This again seems too much. It is equivalent to lbs. 10,830 (1 Palghat *parah* = 10 *edengalis* = 40 *nalis* (1 *nali* = *tolas* 21⅝ in s. Walluvanad and Palghat) = 866,40 *tolas*; as 40 *tolas* = 1 lb. in s. Malabar, 1 *parah* = 866,40 : 40 = 21⅝ lbs and 500 = lbs 10,830).

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans



*thayam* was followed and caste, or rather sub-caste, endogamy. There was more polyandry in the second generation of this family than in any other encountered so far. I found that Kunji was married to two husbands; Lakshmi, aged thirty three, to four husbands; Paru, thirty, to two husbands; Sita, twenty eight, to three husbands; and Narayani, already mentioned, to two husbands. All the respective husbands were brothers, and only fraternal polyandry was practised. The women had all married early: Kunji and Yakshmi at sixteen, Paru at fifteen, Sita a bit later at twenty four, and Narayani, the youngest, at eighteen. The reason for which Sita had married later was that she had been taken by the three younger husbands of her elder sister Lakshmi, after seventeen years of marriage with the latter. Only Kanju, the eldest, had remained with Lakshmi, and Raman, Narayan and Krishna had decided to marry Sita jointly, when they found that she was not getting married and showed no inclination to do so outside. The two younger brothers of the Mudrikkelparampil household, Raman and Kunyuni, were eighteen and sixteen when they took Nani to wife; she was now twenty. Polyandry certainly did not look as if it were dying out in the blacksmith's caste, judging, at least, from this striking example.

595* 601 [614] [582] [581]

The property upon which the family lived was worth four thousand rupees. It consisted of the house, some agricultural implements and a paddy field. The people were tenants of the Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* Kodierthamana, and paid him the rent of a customary *verumpattam* nine rupees yearly, plus a renewal fee of thrice the rent every twelve years. Poreyn and Kunyuni were practising smiths, hence the implements we had seen on coming in, and Raman worked at the Metal Industries Ltd. in Shoranur, where we camped. They also cultivated the paddy field to produce some of the rice they needed themselves, although the yield was not very great. The genealogy is given in Table 12.

595* 435 427 595* [326] [243] [433]

On the 15th of November, 1949, together with interpreter and guide, I visited a family belonging to the third sub-caste of the Kammalans, that of the carpenters or *Asari* (often pronounced *Ashari*). I heard that laterite-cutters called *Puri-asari* or "mud carpenters" were assimilated to these people, but that they only constituted a division of the sub-caste. They are also reputed to be polyandrous; I did no have an opportunity, however, to verify this myself.

595* 564 [335] [333]

The *Asari* whom I saw that day, lived at Palappuram, a village on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, some few miles east of Ottappalam. The compound of the house was by the side of the road on the right, just beyond the village, coming from the west. It was a very poor looking

595* 342 [361]

[Text continues on P 199]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans



construction made of woven palm leaves and thatched, and we interviewed two men: Raman, aged fifty seven, and his eldest son, Kutikrishnan, who was thirty five. The name of the household and *tarawad* was Perinkulam. 595* [342] [614]

Kutikrishnan told us that he had two fathers, Raman, who was with us that day, and Shangu, a younger one, aged fifty five, who was absent. All his fathers' sisters, and there had been three of them, had died in infancy. His mother was called Lakshmi and was fifty; I was unable to ascertain the name of the *tarawad* from which she came. Kutikrishnan's wife bore the same name as his mother and he had had three boys and a girl by her. Only the daughter was alive, as the sons had all died of what he described as "convulsions". 595* 601 [165]

I asked why, if the fathers had been polyandrous, the second generation was not so too. Informant 1 attributed it to times having changed and "civilization spreading". By this he meant that people did not wear their hair tied in the typical Kerala top-knot on one side of the forehead any longer and had also taken to growing moustaches; he said, too, that it was the women now who objected to having more than one husband. In some marriage agreements, it was specified, he said, that the daughter of the house would only be given to one man. It was particularly in wealthy families that this was taking place, because they could afford it. Raman, informant 2, when consulted as to what he thought of these new ways, said that they were bad, but what could be done about them? In olden days, it was always said that polyandry was good because: "Where four breasts cannot agree, two heads can", meaning that the women cannot live in peace together while the men can. Nowadays, the young people did not seem to understand this, and the result was that property was split up between sons and life made harder for them. 595* 178 [302] [675]

When I came to make out the genealogy of the family, I found that in spite of all this talk about new-fangled ways, Amini, Kutikrishnan's sister was married polyandrously to three brothers of a *tarawad* called Warode. It was significant, however, that both informants disclaimed any knowledge of the names of the brothers of the elder husband, Narayan. Later, I heard that although Madhavan, a younger brother of informant 1, aged eighteeen, had not been publicly married to his sister-in-law, Lakshmi, he was known to share her with his brother in the old, traditional polyandrous way. The genealogy is given in Table 13. 595* 601

The carpenter sub-caste of the Kammalans, Raman told us, have exogamous *tarawads* and *kiriyams*. They too, while observing the rule strictly for the *makkathayam tarawad*, are not so careful about it in the 569 619 582

[Text Continues on P. 201]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans
Kolla-Kurups



and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lakkidi. We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 206]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll



any rent for it, but on the contrary, received payment as shampooers and masseurs of their landlord. Fees for those services were, on an average, twelve annas per session, and they received the money at regular intervals from seven to fourteen or twenty one days. Four times a year (every "season"), they were also entitled to two bags of rice, food, oil for massage and a bath(?). (I am not quite clear as to what the latter item stands for, but this is what I have in my notes.)

On the 26th of November, 1949, I visited a *Tol-kollan* household, at Meitenadesam, near Ottappalam. The name of this sub-caste means literally "skin-workers", and its members are leather-workers and cobblers. The house in which this family lived was the most miserable of all those we had or were still to see. It stood in the coconut groves on the outskirts of Ottappalam, and we went there on foot. It was a broken down construction of woven palm leaves and mud walls and the thatch on the roof was in bad condition. An old lady called Kurumba (see Fig. 14), sat just outside the front door, bare breasted and with enlarged holes in the lobes of her ears so that she could accomodate the sizeable gold lumps which are inserted here in Malayalam fashion. With her was her elderly daughter, Kunji, who received us. She was very polite and insisted on offering us some fresh coconut milk.

When we asked her about polyandry, she scoffed at the idea and said that in her family at least, the practice had been given up already in the generation of her father and mother. The men quarrelled too much about the common wife, she said, and besides, the women resented it and did not want it any more. There were members of her sub-caste who were still polyandrous, but as they were few and far between it would not be easy to locate them.

Under the circumstances, it seemed useless to make out a genealogy of these people, and I did not have time to look for a polyandrous *Tol-kollan* family elsewhere.

From this house, in the evening of the same day and with the same interpreters and guides, I went on to the home of some *Kanisans* or astrologers, who are also known as *Panikkars* locally. Theirs was a better dwelling, standing hidden in a thick grove of plantains and coconut trees well shaded and pleasant. We were received by a man called Ramankuti, thirty five years old, who offered us some chairs to sit on and very readily answered our questions.

He told us that his household bore the name of Pellarmangalam, and that his *kalarikel* was similarly called. It appeared that *Kanisans* do not have *tarawads* either, and that their patrilineal clans are called "gymna-

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Manans
Panans



first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier to get work. 595* 601

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans, I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography). [115] [551] 614 564 [582] [428]

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his employees and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers. 564 410 465

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf umbrella maker). 564 [243]

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the verandah of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give the boys more and proper food. 595* [342]

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once polyandrous union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband. She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage, and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breast-feeding the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I 595* 601 853

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar



The cloths are placed in the western room of the house (padinhatta), in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and ashtamangalyam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of mangalyam or marriage. These are rice, paddy (unhusked rice), the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round box called cheppu. These will be found placed on the floor of the room as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groomsman enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloths and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east, with the ashtamangalyam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groomsman then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride sprinkles rice over the lamps and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom, who immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. Next morning, the vettilakettu or salkāram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is feasting in honour of the occasion. Uzhamporukkuka or vidāram kayaral is a peculiar form

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar



mouth. With the breaking of a cocoanut, and the offering of some powdered rice, betel leaf, areca nut, etc., the body is taken to the pyre. The members junior to the deceased go round the pyre three, five, or seven times, throw paddy and rice over the dead body, put scantlings of sandal wood, prostrate at the feet of the corpse, and then set fire to the pyre. When the body is almost wholly consumed, one of the male members carries a pot of water, and, after making three rounds, the pot is broken and thrown into the pyre. The death of an elderly male member of a family is marked by udakakriya and sanchayanam, and the daily bali performed at the bali kutti (altar) planted in front of the house, or in the courtyard in the centre of the house, where there is one. The Ashtikurissi Nāyar officiates as priest at all such obsequies. On the morning of the fifteenth day, the members of the family wear cloths washed by a Vēlan, and assemble together for purification by the Nāyar priest, both before and after bathing, who throws on them paddy and rice, and sprinkles the holy mixture. The Elayad or family purōhit then performs another punnayaham or purification, and on the sixteenth day he takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day, and the morning of the sixteenth day, the purōhits and villagers are sumptuously feasted, and presents of cloths and money are made to the Elayads. In the Chittūr tāluk, the Tamil Brāhman sometimes performs priestly functions in place of the Elayad. Dīksha is performed for forty-one days, or for a whole year, for the benefit of the departed soul. This last ceremony is invariably performed on the death of the mother, maternal uncle, and elder brother."

In connection with the habitations of the Nāyars, Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "A house may face east or

13: Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

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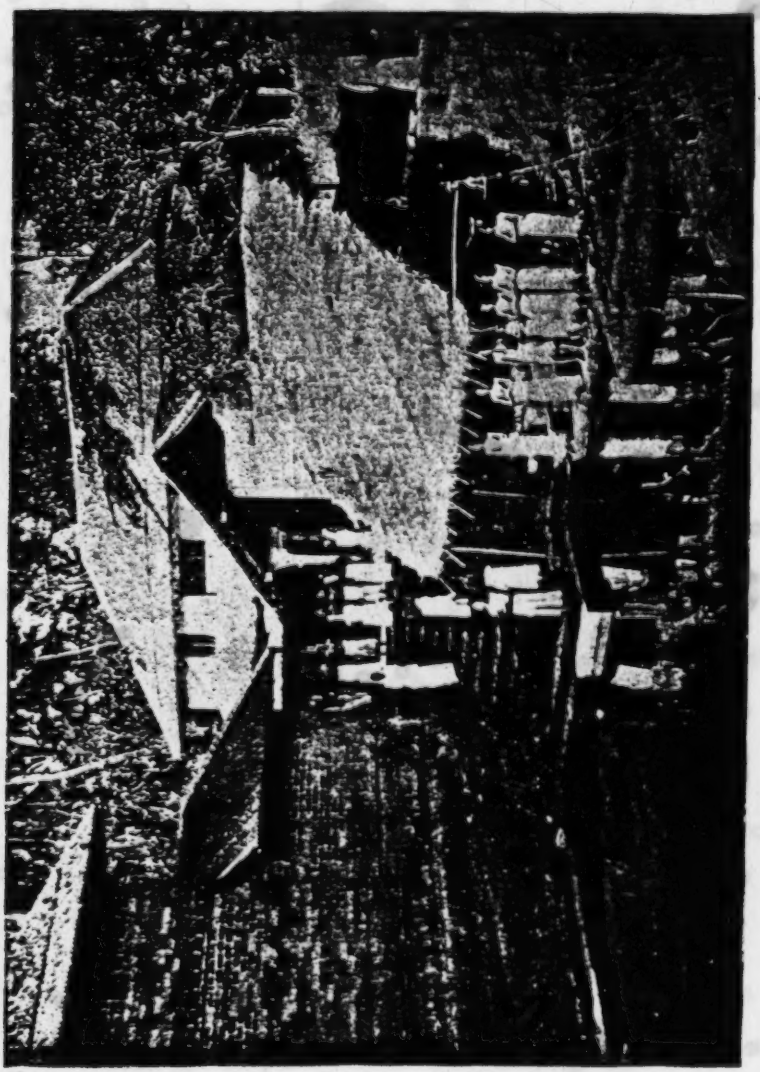
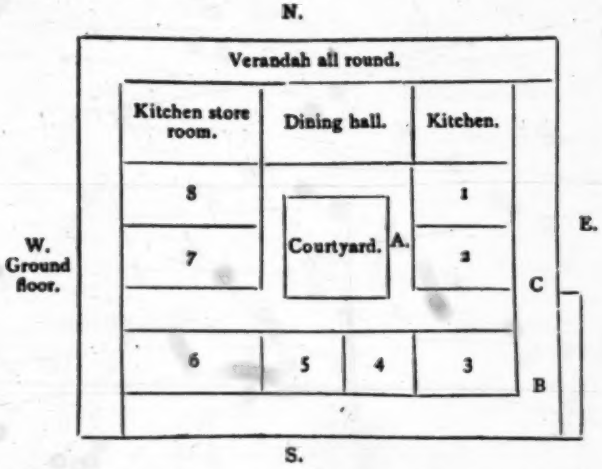


NÁYAR HOUSE.

[facing P. 361]

342
[823] west, never north or south; as a rule, it faces the east. Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing
351 of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this;
[184] there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the
342 Nāyars. The following is a plan of a nālapura or four-
556 sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich :—




Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for
[532] the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of
[613] the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver,
[735] or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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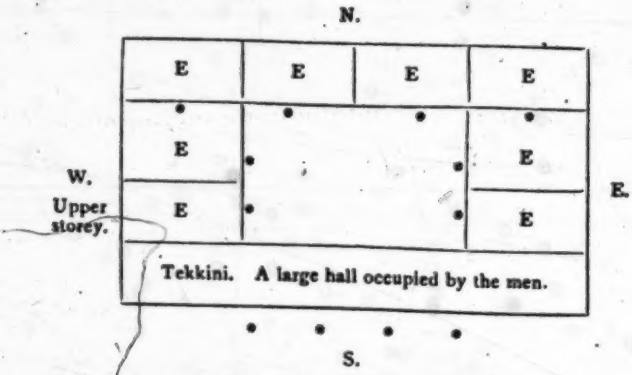
Nayar



afford to have these images made, substitute a stone. [532] Offerings are made to these images, or to the stones at [613] every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, [735] and the bird is then taken inside and offered. The [782] entrance is at C.




There are windows at * * *. E are rooms occupied by women and children. It may be noticed that the [513] apartment where the men sleep has no windows on the side of the house which is occupied by women. The latter are relatively free from control by the men as to who may visit them. We saw, when speaking of funeral [351] ceremonies, that a house is supposed to have a court-yard, and, of course, it has this only when there are four sides to the house. The nālapura is the proper form of house, for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the 342 ordinary Nāyar's house that one sees all over Malabar.

The ordinary house is roughly of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper storey. There are no doors, and only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep at one end, women [513] at the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is

342 always shade from the many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing in a separate compound, have been by many writers supposed to have been designed with special reference to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is [244] his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or expense, the few necessaries of his existence. The garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-[356] room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is [237] taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile [532] to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk 346 on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a [343] vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where [164] some family spirit is located. These are generally those of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or other emblem is located within this out-house, which is also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura [782] (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate 351 the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner [312] is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for [245] bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain, tamarind and mango.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar



tamarind, and mango. The whole house is known as vitu. The houses are built on various models, such as pattayappura, nālukettu, ettukettu, and kuttikettu."

Concerning the dress of the Nāyars, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the males dress themselves in a mundu (cloth), a loose lower garment, and a towel. A neriyatu, or light cloth of fine texture with coloured border, is sometimes worn round the mundu on festive occasions. Coats and caps are recent introductions, but are eschewed by the orthodox as unnational. It is noted by Mr. Logan that 'the women clothe themselves in a single white cloth of fine texture, reaching from the waist to the knees, and occasionally, when abroad, they throw over the shoulder and bosom another similar cloth. But by custom the Nāyar women go uncovered from the waist. Upper garments indicate lower caste, or sometimes, by a strange reversal of Western notions, immodesty.' Edward Ives, who came to Anjengo about 1740, observes that 'the groves on each bank of the river are chiefly planted with cocoanut trees, and have been inhabited by men and women in almost a pure state of nature, for they go with their breasts and bellies entirely naked. This custom prevails universally throughout every caste from the poorest planter of rice to the daughter or consort of the king upon the throne.'" [According to ancient custom, Nāyar women in Travancore used to remove their body-cloth in the presence of the Royal Family. But, since 1856, this custom has been abolished, by a proclamation during the reign of H.H. Vanchi Bala Rāma Varma Kulasakhara Perumal Bhagiodya Rāma Varma. In a critique on the Indian Census Report, 1901, Mr. J. D. Rees observes* that

* Nineteenth Century, 1904.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII



# THE COCHIN STATE.

## WATAKANCHERY (TALAPILLI TALUK).

[*By S. Subbarama Aiyar, Christian College, Madras.*]

An absence of villages, as they are to be found in the east of the peninsula, is a characteristic of Malabar generally, including the States of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar District of the Madras Presidency. The Malayalis are averse to having their houses congregated together. But the Taluk of Palghat is an exception. It is situated in the gap between the Nilgiris on the north, and the Palnis and other high ranges on the south, and is the natural line of communication between the west coast and the eastern plains, utilized by the South Indian Railway. All the villages in the Palghat taluk are designed in a manner that suggests that the original immigrants, coming from the east, were accustomed to an intense form of corporate life. They have a scientific and regular plan, and the description of any one of them will serve for all.

The Brahmans live in closely packed houses and their colony is called a '*gramam*' or '*agraharam.*' There is invariably either a temple at one end, or the streets of the *gramam* radiate in all directions from a temple in the midmost place. There are also wells in the street common to all the villagers. There is scarcity of water in summer in almost all the villages of Palghat as they are situated on a high level and rocky ground. The *gramam* is surrounded by the *tarai* in which all the other castes live. Artisans and agricultural labourers live there in houses built singly, but the weavers generally inhabit hovels built in rows. People of the same caste and profession congregate in particular blocks of the *tarai.* The *tarai* is occupied by the richest janmi as well as the poorest day labourer. The *tarai* has its own *kavu* or temple in which the low caste people conduct their worship. The *gramam* with its adjoining *tarai* is set up on rather elevated ground in the midst of paddy fields or on the slope of an adjoining hill so that every available acre of land may be cultivated. All houses in the *gramam* are built in the same way. From the street you step into a verandah whose extent corresponds to the whole width of the house; hence into a small room, the *neli*, to the right of which is a granary. The *neli* leads you into a rectangular hall, in the middle of which is a yard exposed to the sky. To the right of this is another big hall separated from the other by a long window crossed by beams. The store-room is on the street side of this, the kitchen on the back side. The kitchen has a verandah abutting on the garden. A cow-shed is erected at the other end of the garden. The house may or may not possess upstairs rooms; these usually adjoin the street.

In that part of Malabar in which Watakanchery is situated the general plan of the Palghat type of house is followed, with modifications, by the *Tamil* Brahmans. The Malayali Brahmans, known as Nambudris, and the Nayars, have their houses surrounded by big compounds. Entering from the compound you step into a portico which thrusts itself forward from the general structure of the house.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India

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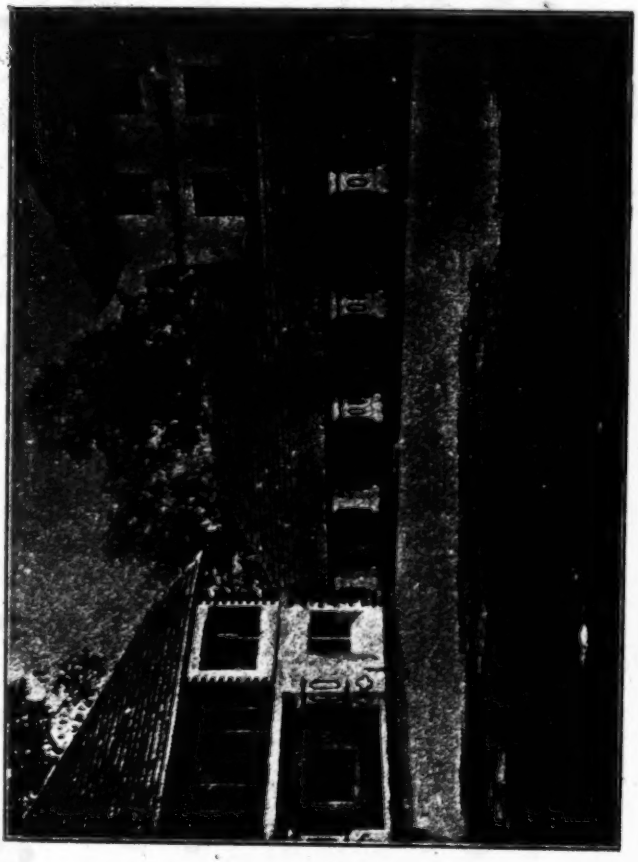

COURT-YARD OF NAMBUDRI HOUSE. Photo by G. Slater.

[facing p. 124]

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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342 From the portico, you go direct into a big hall in the middle of which is a big yard paved with granite; this yard is exposed to the sky. On one side of the hall—right or left—are situated two or three rooms, from one of which you are taken to upstairs rooms which are also connected with the portico. On the portico side of the hall are the kitchen, bath-room, and a few more rooms which are utilized for various purposes. In another place of the compound is an outhouse in which Brahmans are asked to perform worship.* Near this house is a tank and a well. The house itself possesses a well near it for the exclusive use of the inmates.

But educated Nayars now-a-days build their houses on different plans.

361 *Preliminary.*—Watakanchery is a Government division, rather than a true village, being marked out merely for convenience of revenue assessment. It stretches from east to west a distance of nearly four miles along the foot of a hill. A water-course which runs from east to west forms the northern boundary; the maximum distance from north to south is nearly a mile and a half. The whole area is 3,692·64 acres (nearly 5½ square miles). It is an area containing a few groups of houses intersected by paddy fields and "parambas," i.e., land on which paddy cultivation is not undertaken.

Watakanchery proper, or the town of Watakanchery, as it is called in the village accounts, is at the easternmost boundary of the Government village area and is the headquarters of the taluk containing all the public offices. Two tracts of land, one inhabited by Mappillas (Muhammadans) and another by Syrian Christians (locally known as Nasranees, i.e., Nazarenes) are included in the "town" of Watakanchery from the contiguous areas of the adjoining Government villages on the north and south respectively. Its area is 1½ square miles.

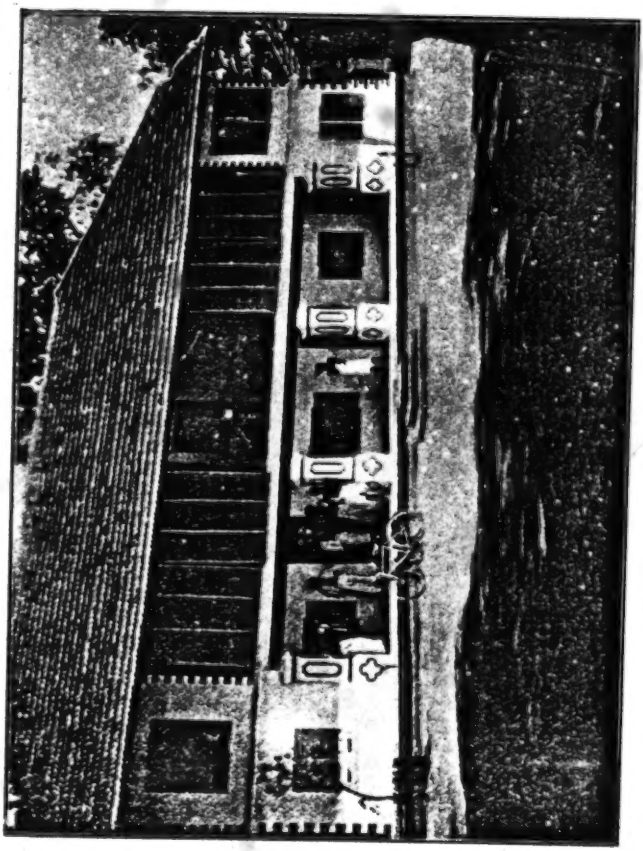
The Taluk of Talapilli contains 74 such "villages" divided solely for revenue purposes. In the "town" Brahmans live in great numbers, while the lower castes occupy the rest of the village area. This block I shall designate Watakanchery (T) and the whole area Watakanchery (V) in the following.

162 [779] 564 *Population.*—Watakanchery (T) has about 2,000 inhabitants; Watakanchery (V) about 4,000. Watakanchery (T) contains within its limits three religions—Hindus in the centre and Mappillas (Muhammadans) and Christians to the north and south, respectively. Among the Hindus the Brahmans form the majority in the "town," while there are a few "vocational" castes such as barbers, goldsmiths, etc., and a few Nayars. Though the term "castes" is in strictness to be applied to Hindus alone the Mappillas and Christians are regarded as two other castes. The Mappillas and the Christians cannot touch the Hindu caste-people without polluting them, while there are castes within the Hindu fold itself, such as carpenters, goldsmiths, masons, Cherumas (vide below), Eluvas, etc., who are [113] kept at a distance of a specified number of feet by the higher castes. There is a full and interesting study of the tribes and castes in Mr. L. K. Anandakrishna Iyer's "Cochin Tribes and Castes." The Hindus however form the majority.

[778] *[In Nayar houses, I am informed by Mr. L. K. Anandakrishna Iyer, this shrine is sacred to the cobra, to whom worship must be given by a Nambudri brahman, as otherwise the Nayars are bitten. This belief may be the cause of the subjection imposed on Nayars by Nambudris, particularly in relation to Nayar women.—Ed.]

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII





GUEST CHAMBER OF NAMBUDRI HOUSE. Photo by G. Slater.

[facing p. 126]

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
Kerala AW11

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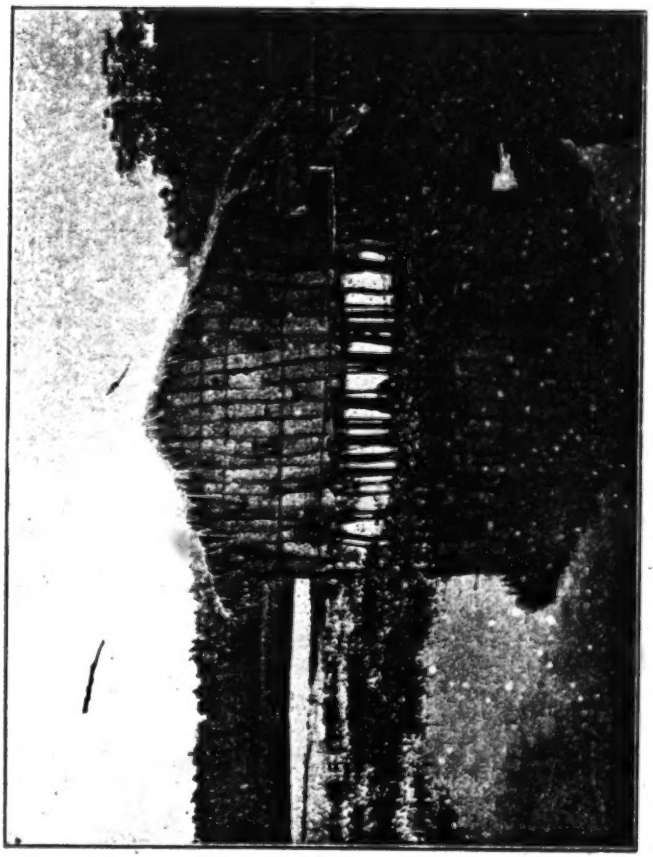

HUT NEAR TRICHUR, COCHIN STATE. Photo by G. Slater.

[facing p. 132]

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351 useful for cookery are watered and grown in the compound itself; while during the rains also vegetables are grown, such as brinjals, lady's fingers, pumpkins, peas, etc. During summer the trees and vegetables in the compound are watered from the well which is a special feature of every house.

242 *Insect-pests.*—The *caterpillars* of certain moths ate away this year (1916) the tender blades of the paddy as soon as they cropped up from underground. This appeared at the beginning of the sowing season (May) and lasted for a week or two. Farmers here say that these have not appeared for years past. When I wrote to the Agricultural Superintendent of the State at Trichur he suggested the following remedy: "Dig a trench ½ foot wide by 1½ feet deep along the four sides of a field where these insects would fall in their travel from field to field, but would not be able to get out of it."

A kind of fly or flea is said to eat away the juice of the rice at the stalk of the paddy as soon as it reaches the milk stage.

232 *Cattle diseases.*—Sore feet. The feet are well washed with hot water, and turpentine, teak-oil, or cashewnut oil is smeared in the sore; the animal is also made to stand in a muddy place into which the leaves of a certain tree are strewn.

Mouth disease. Pig-ghee or bear-ghee is smeared on the tongue.

Swelling in the belly. The animal without any apparent cause falls down and dies. No medicine is applied in such cases.

Malignant sore-throat and cow-pox are also common.

[654] An Agricultural Department for the State has been established recently at Trichur with a model farm attached to it. The present Superintendent is an England-returned Cochinite. Help is often derived from here, but the farmers themselves are shrewd in practical agriculture.

313 *Timber.*—Wood for fuel, implements, buildings, etc., is obtained from the neighbouring hills and forests. The taluk of Talapilli is full of forests especially on the eastern side. Nearly 43 per cent of the area of the State is forest and its timber is even exported to foreign parts. The Forest Department is a source of income to the State.

[482] Coolies carry faggots of fuel on their heads from the neigh-
[435] bouring hills for sale; sometimes the people get cart-loads; a decent head-load now costs nearly 4 annas and a cart-load from Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 3; prices were much lower a few years back. A full head-load is divided into smaller bundles before being sold, and a woman may get six or eight annas for a bundle as heavy as she can carry.

Durable building materials are got from the forests and timber depots, but mango-planks, bamboos and jack-tree planks are also used.

● 342 *Houses.*—Houses are not built in rows. Every house is surrounded by a compound hedged round by bamboo. Such compounds are intersected by lanes. Rice-straw is used in thatching houses; tiles are replacing thatch but the majority of houses still are thatched. No terraced houses can be seen in these parts where the monsoon rains pour down with full force.

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241 leads to the tree fruiting within two or three years, instead of four or five. The leaves that fall from the trees in gardens are used as green manure in the paddy fields and coconut gardens. No such thing as growing green manure is known. No wood or forest is near so that the people may bring the leaves.

242 In fact very little manuring takes place in the village. What is actually done in the cultivation of chief crops is to plough the land. Every year much is drawn from the soil, and nothing is returned to it. I have stated above that lands which returned Rs. 1,000 a year do not now return more than Rs. 400 or 500. The two most potent causes for this deterioration are the system of land tenure and the absence of manuring. Perhaps the second is the result of the first, but I think the want of agricultural knowledge is the cause of the want of manuring and scientific cultivation.

372 *Wood and fuel.*—The outer cover of the coconut, the leaves of the same, mango trunks, serve for fuel for the whole village, and they are obtained in plenty, but the price is rising with the general rise of prices.

[313] Wood for implements, building, etc., is obtained from Cochin State, brought in carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes.

342 *The village—Houses.*—For buildings granite is obtained from a place four miles distant, mortar is prepared in the village, mud
361 from the village itself, tiles from different places, the least distant being twenty miles away, for thatch the leaves of the coconut are used, iron things are bought in the bazaar. The houses in the village are all isolated from one another. Every part of the village is inhabited except the paddy fields. However, at the present day traders have a tendency to build their houses as near the road as possible and form streets. The people also have a tendency to live as near the temple as possible, and this has resulted in the formation of four streets, surrounding the temple on all the four sides. These streets form also the bazaar of the village. There are here about 100 houses.

361 The lands adjacent to the temple are occupied by Brahmans and Nayars. Any other place can be occupied by any family. The
571 houses of the low castes, high castes, and of other religions are intermingled. The same garden may be occupied by Muhammadans, Hindus and Christians, and they all live very amicably as if they belonged to one and the same religion.

735 The Pariahs, whose families are only three in number, occupy certain portions of the land of a big landlord. The landlord gives the Pariahs free houses and a certain allowance a month. He thinks it incumbent upon him to protect and maintain them. Their huts, though small, are yet tidy and neat. The allowance that was freely given them has now become a right. They follow certain industries and go to rich men's houses to beg twice a month, and they are given a certain quantity of rice.

342 There are 977 thatched houses, 313 tiled houses, no terraced houses.

286 *Crafts and industries.*—There are seven families of weavers consisting of 39 members, i.e., 14 men, 12 women, 13 children under fifteen years. They have been in the village from times long past. They weave a cloth 1 foot wide, 1¼ yards long, and this is used as undercloth. They also at times weave a cloth ¾ or 1

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178 426 The increase in the number of families must not be taken for a sign of prosperity. I have sought out its causes. It has both a social and an economic cause. The breaking up of the old 'Tharvads' into small homesteads, owing to want of harmony among the members, mismanagement of property due to ignorance and rank illiteracy, growing indebtedness of the once rich Tharvads to the local money-lenders or the landlord, are the causes of the downfall of the great Tharvads of old which half a century ago were gracing this desam; the stories yet current in those parts of men of high worth and talents who belonged to them, and the occasional ruined foundations of their family houses alone remain. Indeed joint families have almost all broken up and the Tharvad properties all absorbed by the local 'Jenmis.' The people are day by day being reduced to want and dependence on the landlord and the creditor.

564 The desam cannot be called a 'caste' desam strictly speaking. There are no separate quarters allotted on the basis of caste difference. In spite of the rigorous observance of the 'system of pollution' between caste and caste, peculiar to the Malabar country, all castes hold lands, work, and have families promiscuously throughout the land. For example, every landholding farmer, who is usually a Nayar, has in his family precincts (indeed far enough away to be out of reach of pollution) small homesteads of his labourers who are generally Cherumas or Pulayas * by caste.

There are—

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Brahman | families ... | 24 | individuals. |
| 3 | Ambalavasi | ,, ... | 36 | ,, |
| 137 | Nayar | ,, ... | 956 | ,, |
| 85 | Tiyya | ,, ... | 584 | ,, |
| 80 | Cheruma | ,, ... | 390 | ,, |
| 24 | Muhammadan | ,, ... | 27 | ,, |
| 1 | Christian family | ... | 6 | ,, |

[463] The *Tiyya* class includes the families of the artisans—'Asari' (carpenter—two families), 'Karuvan' (blacksmith—one family), 'Kollan' (shoemaker—two families), 'Thattan' (goldsmith—one family), 'Mannan' (washerman of the lower class—one family), 'Panikkan' (stone-mason—one family).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Children living | ... ... ... | 642 | |
| ,, dead | ... ... ... | 188 | Born within the last ten years. |
| ,, born lifeless | ... ... | 67 | |

Children below ten are alone included in this. This has been ascertained by enquiry among the mothers.

342 Homesteads number 266. The homesteads of the villagers are miserable looking and squalid, frequently being only mud hovels of eight by five feet, more or less. Not more than 40 houses out of 333 are houses worthy of the name. The rest are simply hovels, often the very picture of poverty and famine.

* Between these two depressed castes there are only minute differences.

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use. No other manure is used. Green manure is not grown but is got from somewhere or other according to circumstances. Varatties are not made. Wood fuel is the only sort used. 241 [372]

*Insect pests.*—Of these, the most ruinous is the "Chazhi" the terror of the ryot. The chazhi is a small insect of the locust species half an inch long which in millions appear in a few seasons and spread desolation in the paddy fields. Two remedies are current against this pestilence: (1) catching them directly by drawing a cloth (which serves the purpose of a net) attached to two handsticks over the crops and thus killing them; (2) but by far the most efficacious remedy in the estimation of the cultivator is the putting of a talisman in the fields which a local conjurer (Mandravadi) has prepared for him. What chazhi is to paddy "Mahali" is to the arecanut, the only difference being that in this case nothing is believed to be possible to combat the calamity. 242 [789]

Cattle diseases are (1) hoof disease, (2) Koraladappan (swelling in the neck), (3) Thada (mumps), (4) obstruction of urine and dung, (5) sudden epileptic attacks, and other diseases whose causes and cure are unknown to the peasant. Poisoning is sometimes done by Paraiyas of neighbouring desams for the sake of getting the flesh. For beef is eaten only by this lowest class and when cattle die they will be called to remove the carcase. A number of cattle are annually destroyed by tigers also which often venture into the sheds of the peasants. Talismans and offerings to deities are conceived to be the only remedy. 232 [789]

No assistance is obtained from the Agricultural department, nor any from any veterinary doctor.

Wood is commonly got for all uses from private trees; but the forest also supplies sometimes wood for small necessities. For building purposes, wood is purchased—not from any fixed place. 313

*Houses.*—The depressed castes have miserable hovels for their houses. A mud wall of five feet height with a ruined roof which can protect the inmate neither from sun nor rain is the order of the day. 342

Except the palatial family homes of the two jenmis, there are no tiled houses. Terracing is not customary here. All other houses are thatched, and thatching is always of straw.

Most houses have gardens surrounding them, where arecanut trees, plantains, mango trees, jack, etc., are grown. They are joyful to look at. 351

The maximum distance of cultivated lands from the home of cultivator is one mile.

An acre of land costs from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300. But purchases on jenmi tenure are worth above Rs. 500. But it is impossible to acquire jenmam property except for jenmis; for the jenmis are jealous guardians of their lands and never sell lands once acquired. Direct threatenings and indirect intimidation are used by them to obtain the jenmam right of lands if held by any lesser landowner. 423 [435]

*Subsidiary industries.*—Neither weaving nor spinning have ever been practised in this desam. 463

Other crafts—

1. Arrack and jaggery making.
2. Ironsmith.

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313 purchased from the nearest markets and brought in carts. Wood is getting dearer and dearer. It used to be very cheap.

The increase in price is due to the felling of trees without replanting, increased outside demand for fuel, as by the railway company and the Shoranur Tile Works; and the better appreciation and consequent increased demand for the local timber trees.

361 *The village.*—Strictly speaking there is no village-site. The houses are not built in street formation, but are scattered throughout the village. This is characteristic of most villages in Malabar and strongly contrasts with what obtains in other districts. The area of the village is 2,380 acres.

Localization of castes is not complete. Brahmans are located in the centre around the temple, with the Nayars, and the other higher castes surrounding them. The Thiyyas or Ezhuvas live farther apart and the depressed classes—Cherumas, Pariahs, etc.—live far out of the way of the higher castes on the outskirts of the village in hovels on hill sides, which are unfrequented by the other castes. Of course there are social prohibitions to their approaching the higher castes, much more to living near them.

342 There are a few fine houses: about 20 are tiled and have two storeys, about half of them belonging to the Brahmans. About 100 are one-storeyed thatched houses, almost exclusively owned by the castes. The rest are mere huts used by the poorer classes. There is no terraced house at all. Most of the houses are pretty old, but the tiled ones are mostly of recent construction. The houses are built more or less on a uniform plan and are often large without being convenient or comfortable.

The Pariahs and Cherumas live in thatched huts, miserable hovels one should call them, small, dark and exposed.

351 Almost every house has a 'garden' of some sort, with a few fruit trees like the coconut-palm, the mango tree, the jack tree, the areca-palm, plantain trees, etc. But very few houses have really good gardens. The gardens are watered from wells, which are found in every house. Whether there are fruit-trees on it or no, each house of the better class has a compound attached to it. This is sometimes used for growing kitchen vegetables.

361 The distance of cultivated lands from the home of the cultivator is never more than one mile. In the working season the ryot starts very early in the morning from his home with his oxen and agricultural implements so as to reach his land in time.

343 Field huts are almost unknown—except tiny watchmen's huts where watch is kept by a man at night when the crops are getting ready for harvest.

323 *Subsidiary industries—Potters.*—There are no weavers. There is a class of potters, of Telugu origin (as their language shows) engaged in making pots for household use, etc. They get the clay for their industry from the banks of the Bharata river (situated to the south of the village). Their wares find a ready market in the neighbouring villages, being very cheap and necessary. The lower castes cook in pots of burnt clay, while the better classes use bronze and other metals, such as copper. The art is the whole time employment of this class. But earnings are not very high, only just affording the means of subsistence. If the art is refined and improved to suit modern conditions and requirements it